1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

ashes) was blind, when a *sakur* and *mey* came and asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Sickness." They said, "Open your eyes," and he could see.'

In one of the tribal histories recorded above we again have an example of the violation of a taboo after death—dressing the dead body in a goat-skin. With regard to what we may call the 'royal clan', i.e. lion clan, I was told: 'In olden times, if any one killed a lion, the skin was sent to the Chief of Kurugu, who then sent it on to the Chief of Mampurugu. There a funeral ceremony was held for it.'

Blood Relationship: Relationship, transmitted through the female line, is called *soog'* (compare the Nankanse *sõõ*). The *soog'* groups are well known, but, as far as I could discover, do not bear any special names. The *soog'* exhibits all the characteristics already noted with regard to the Nankanse *sõõ*.[1] A male cannot transmit a taint of witchcraft, inherited from his mother. 'If your mother can fly (*ak*) (that is, is a witch), you can fly.' (*Soe* is a witch in Talene).

'My sister's child is my *soog'*, my brother's child is not; he is my son.' Again, *ziim* (blood) and *soog'* are synonymous terms.

[1] See Chapter XVIII.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

Kusase, being founded by the ruling class. Timoni, another settlement, now included among and talking Kusal, are really Buls' (Builsa).

My informants stated that the Nabt of Kugri, who taboo the heart of an animal, and the Nabt of Timpale, who taboo a fish, formerly did not intermarry but now do so. I was also informed that at Pusig' there is a clan (?) called Narem whose totem is *naf zur* (a cow tail), but that these people, though now talking Kusal, were formerly Bimoba.

From the above it would appear that we had here among the Kusase, two endogamous clans, Zuos and Nabt, a third having been lately added by the breaking away of a branch of the former which had acquired a sub-totem, i.e. the fish, while other clans which may be found in this area are those introduced by the influx of other tribes, Bimoba, Builsa, and Mampruse. In other words, there are signs of the dual organization having existed there. Proof of this supposition must, however, await a fuller and more minute investigation. A parallel to this will, as we shall see later, be found among a neighbouring tribe, the Tampolense (see Chapter LVI).

The blood-related kindred-groups found among the Nankanse, &c., also exist here, being known as *sog*. Again we find the taint of witchcraft transmitted only down this line. 'If your mother "cannot see", if your mother is "blind", all her descendants through the female line are also blind. This relationship is called *sog*. *Soe* is a witch. To "see" is a bad thing. In old days if we found a witch we wanted to tie him up and beat him until he died. You cannot leave a person who is eating people; he will spoil the world. As the Elders sit and converse at night, they will see a fire flickering *ta ta ta* at some compound, and when some one dies, the *baa* (soothsayer) will find out that there is a witch in that compound. Many people can "see" but do not eat people. The children of witches are the beautiful women whom men love the most. In olden times when a witch killed your child or "brother" you would want to kill him, but others would beg you to forgive him.'

Traditions of the Kusase: 'When the Mampruse came from Gambaga, they found us here. In old days we only knew *Tenedan'* and had no *Na* (Territorial Ruler). We have always been here. Even when we move about in the locality and overtake some other people, we sacrifice to the land. *Tenedan' da moro ti* (the *Tenedan'* had us), we did not know what is now called *Nam* (Chieftainship). When anything happened, we all met and gave him (the *Tenedan'*) things to sacrifice and thus gained life and grain. The *Tenedan'* had power; when any one refused to obey him he would strike the land (*nwe tey*) and that person would

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The Chain of Sub-clans

[618] [613] Thus came into being this chain of four patrilineal sub-clans (Tongo, Yamɔlag, Sie, and Biuk), each the skeleton of a community. From these primary nuclei colonies have continually hived off to settle in neighbouring areas, particularly at Gbambee, Gorogo, Ba'ari, Woo, and Datɔk. Each sub-clan is itself a composite system of lineages: authentic lineages constituted by the direct line of agnatic descent from the clan founder, Mosuor; attached lineages, linked to these usually by the dogma of sister-descent; and assimilated lineages. The attached lineages are [611] identified as *ti tau biis*—our sister's children—descendants in the direct male line of a female member of one of the authentic lineages. The stereotyped formula attributes the origin of such a lineage either to a sister's son (*ahɔŋ*) who came to live in his mother's brother's (*ahɔb*)

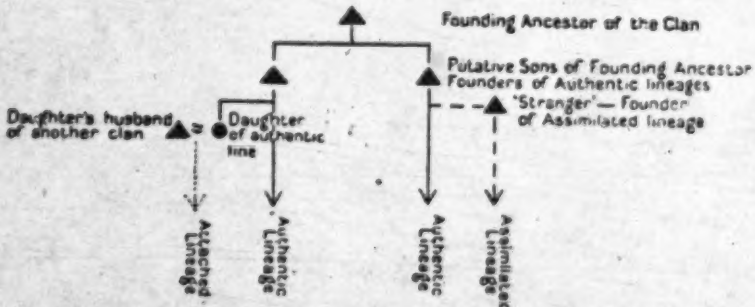


Diagram showing Relationship of Accessory Lineages to Authentic Line

[586] community, or to a sister who was divorced by her husband by the irrevocable procedure of blowing ash on her (*pɔbh*), and returned to the shelter of her parental home with her children. By this form of divorce a man renounces his rights in his children, who henceforth become members of their maternal lineage, as if they had been illegitimately begotten by a lover. The agnatic posterity of such children, as of any spinster's son, becomes a lineage attached to that of their ancestor's mother.

We shall call these 'attached lineages' because they are linked to the authentic lineages by actual or putative cognatic ties. An attached lineage maintains its continuity and distinctness, like any other lineage, even if its patrilineal progenitor is alleged to have repudiated its ancestress and his own progeny.

The existence of the assimilated lineages is often traced to an ancestor who was a 'kinsman' (*mabii*) accompanying the founder of the authentic lineage when he first arrived. Of some such lineages, however, it is whispered that they sprang from slaves of the authentic lineage with which they are connected, or from foreign refugees who sought their protection. The term used for these lineages is intended to convey that they are incorporated in the sub-clan by virtue of their dependence on and participation in the life of an authentic lineage. We shall also describe these two kinds of lineages collectively as accessory lineages.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

basis, for instance, of their technique of divination, which depends on rapid and spontaneous inference from stereotyped signs and symbols.

These myths provide yet another illustration of the indifference of the Tallensi to the origins of their customs. The emphasis in their culture is on conduct, not on creed; on performance rather than on doctrine. At the same time, these myths express, as we have previously noted, the basic postulate of Tale philosophy—that the ancestors are the *fons et origo* of their whole social order—and they show also how the natives visualize their totemic taboos as symbols of the moral and ritual bonds imposed by agnatic descent.

The Totemic Avoidances of the Talis as a Reflex of the Social Structure

We can now resume our analysis of the relationship of Talis ritual observances to the social structure. We have considered certain funeral rites and totemic avoidances as the chief indices of structural differentiation. We have seen that they are not, as the natives sometimes imply, hard-and-fast criteria. They mark off the Talis cluster from the Namoos in a broad way, but reflect the overlapping between them which our study of the clanship system has brought out. And among the Talis themselves, though there is a considerable congruence between genealogical grouping as determined by the canon of agnatic descent and distinctive ritual observances, it is not a one-to-one relationship.

The funeral customs and totemic taboos we have reviewed have one feature in common which helps to explain why the natives think of them as indices of social differentiation. They are tied to the agnatic line, passed on from father to child just like membership of the lineage. They owe their binding force to the fact that they were, according to native belief, instituted by the ancestors of the lineage or clan. Hence arises a significant common element, the oath associated with the observance. Breach of the ritual observance or using the oath falsely is blasphemy against the ancestors.

We pick up this thread again in another sphere of the ritual system of the Talis. It is a common opinion in Taleland that the taboos against eating the tortoise and water-tortoise are specially characteristic of the Hill Talis. And the reason always given for this is that these taboos are connected with the Talis cult of the External *Bɔyar*. Among the Hill Talis, if a child transgresses the taboo (*galəm kihər*) by eating of the forbidden animal, its father 'pays' (*yɔ*) a fowl to the External *Bɔyar* of which his clan is an adherent. The fowl is sacrificed at the *Bɔyar*, with apologies for the transgression and pleas for the child's future well-being. A fine is thus paid to annul the trespass, and the smallness of the fine is evidence that the trespass is not considered serious.

As a rule, the group of clans and maximal lineages forming the congregation of a particular External *Bɔyar* all have the same avoidances. Thus, all the units that owe ritual allegiance to Bona'ab, the External *Bɔyar* of Kpata'ar and its associated lineages, taboo the tortoise and the water-tortoise. Hence, individuals who are the spiritual wards of Bona'ab may not eat these animals, and, if they belong to other clans or other

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

182 been discussing have a deeper meaning to the natives than merely as convenient indices of social differentiation. It is on account of their deeper meaning that they serve also, in certain contexts, to identify corporate units. The very casualness with which Tallensi speak of their totemic taboos; the unquestioning way in which they take their funeral customs for granted; and at the other extreme, the connexion of these ritual observances with the supreme religious institution of the Hill Talis, whose influence pervades their whole social life, all show that we are dealing with something that goes down to the axiomatic ideas and values that underpin the social structure.

182 These ritual institutions, with their common pattern of injunction,
•611 oath, and determination by descent or quasi-descent, form part of an interlocked system of religious values that springs directly out of the social structure. Their common focus is the notion of dependence on the ancestors determined by the fact of descent. But it is not descent in its physiological sense that they refer to. They symbolize the fact that descent, to the Tallensi, axiomatically creates bonds of moral and ritual interdependence and obligation. It is because, as we have previously seen, Tallensi tend to read into all ritual relations, whatever their derivation, corresponding genealogical relationships; because the relations of mutual amity and co-operation, even though only in a limited sphere of conduct, imposed by ritual ties are of the same type as those imposed by ties of kinship; because all the rights and duties determined by descent are kept in force by the sanction of the ancestor spirits, that the values appropriate to the sphere of kinship and descent merge with those expressed in religious cult and doctrine. There is a syncretism in the Tale system of ideas and values that images their syncretic social structure. Lineage system and ancestor cult interfuse and at the same time mirror each other.

613 Our analysis can be carried farther if we consider what lineage membership means. It is created by the bare physiological fact of patrilineal descent. But the physiological links between the individual and his ancestors and between all the living members of the lineage have no social significance except as the kernel of the social relations and bonds that come out in economic affairs such as the ownership and use of land; in the exercise of moral and jural rights and duties, as in marriage or parenthood; in ritual belief and practice, as in the ancestor cult. This is the stuff of individual and collective life for the native wherever—and this applies to almost everything he does—the fact of descent is relevant. Membership of his lineage, or his clan, or of a religious community means, to the individual, a particular collection of people taken severally in some situations, collectively in others, with whom he has certain kinds of known and regular social relations reflecting their common interests, and based on the continuity and integrity of the group; and he submits to a number of restraints on word and deed in order to maintain his relations with them. A man experiences this in a multitude of particular actions and events, day after day.

As a member of a particular lineage a man has definite rights and duties and enters into a stream of social relations from which all who do not

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

belong to that agnatic line are excluded. It is a fact that marks him off 613
from a great many people who come into his range of contact. It determines, for example, whom he may or may not marry, what social roles he may or may not exercise, who will support him in his troubles, where he will make his farms, and especially which named ancestors ritually accessible at certain definite, material shrines govern his life. Of course lineage membership, as we know, isolates only the central area of a person's field of social relations, as this is determined by his birth. Lineage membership, clan membership, and membership of the wider [61] ●
community of the Hill Talis, or of a *Bɔyar* congregation, are all primarily determined by the fact of birth; and the social relations by which one zone is distinguished from the next in the total field all belong to the same category.

All the members of the lineage are equally members of it, irrespective of age, sex, or status. The social bonds that define the limits of the lineage and mark its social identity for its members are equally binding on all its members. They all share the sentiments engendered by membership of the lineage. They all feel themselves to be embraced within its corporate unity. These are matters of everyday practical experience. But behind them lies the deep sense of the continuity of the agnatic line. This takes the form, in the individual, of a great pride in his ancestry and a strong feeling of identification with the other members of the lineage and with the lineage as a unit in their common dependence on their ancestors.

At their simplest, the totemic and funeral taboos of the Talis are symbolic expressions of the irrevocable and supremely important fact of lineage membership. But if that were all, they might not have taken a ritual form. Among the Talis we can see more plainly than among the Namoos why these symbols of the social identity conferred on individuals and groups by agnatic descent take the form of ritual observances.

Agnatic descent, as we have pointed out, automatically puts one under moral bonds to certain other people. There is no choice about membership of one's lineage. And there can be no questioning or choosing in the matter of the basic norms of lineage relations. One has rights and duties towards one's co-members of the lineage, amity for them, interest in them, common concerns with them, simply and solely because they are of the same agnatic line. Lineage norms are absolutely binding, and the sanction for this is the common ritual dependence of all the members on their ancestors. This is crystallized in the cult of the lineage *bɔyar*, the thing in which the spiritual jurisdiction of the ancestors over all the lineage members is made tangible and accessible to human thought and action. The lineage as a social entity is founded on moral and ritual imperatives. This is how the natives feel it: we need not here concern ourselves with possible scientific explanations of this fact. What matters is that this sense of the moral and ritual imperatives behind lineage relations, explicitly brought out as it is in the cult of the ancestors, is also diffused through all the relations of lineage members. The function of totemic taboos is to crystallize in a clear-cut, concrete, external object of no intrinsic significance this diffused sense of the moral and ritual imperatives behind lineage bonds. The taboos are simple and definite

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

to the husband's own ancestors, but to all the ancestors, for the whole social order is based on the continuity of the patrilineal line.

One reason why the totemic taboos of the Hill Talis 'belong together' with the cult of the External *Bɔyar* is because all Tale ritual institutions tie up with the ancestor cult; for Tale ritual ideas and values are, as we have several times emphasized, a reflex of the social structure and this rests on a genealogical basis. But the connexion can be seen in more precise terms. Membership of the lineage, which means adherence to the norms of lineage relations symbolized in the totemic taboos, is a prerequisite for membership of the clan and for admission to the *Bɔyar* cult. Just as the constitution of the *Bɔyar* congregation embraces and rests upon the lineage and clan, so the ritual values and observances of the *Bɔyar* cult draw the ritual symbols of lineage identity and continuity into their orbit. The External *Bɔyar* is a transposition of the lineage *bɔyar* to a higher level of social integration; allegiance to the External *Bɔyar* is an extension, on this higher level, of the bond with the lineage *bɔyar*. In terms of ritual observances, admission to the covenant of the External *Bɔyar* presupposes observance of certain totemic taboos. And this mutual implication is strengthened by the fact that every male of a Talis lineage is bound to become a member of the *Bɔyar* cult. Lineage, clan, and *Bɔyar* congregation represent three interconnected levels of social relations and the ritual observances that correspond to them. The simplest level of this field system implies the existence of the most complex which in turn presupposes the existence of the simplest.

It is a point of significance that women, though bound by the totemic taboos as members of the lineage, are not admitted to the cult of the External *Bɔyar*. This is not only because the cult of the ancestors is the exclusive province of men. Women marry out of the lineage; they do not pass on to their children physical or social membership of it; they do not perpetuate the lineage. It is the men who maintain and perpetuate the corporate unity and continuity of the lineage; and it is on these that both the clan structure and the *Bɔyar* cult rest. It is the men who both keep the lineage going as a social entity symbolized in its totemic taboos, and maintain the social order of which the External *Bɔyar* is the pivot.

In sum, then, the totem stands for the relative autonomy of the maximal lineage, the External *Bɔyar* for the interdependence of lineages in a single religious community; and the two ritual principles fuse owing to the fact that this ideological community is constituted by the knitting together of maximal lineages in local clusters. At the geographical centre of the ideological community, the summit of the Tong Hills, the fusion is most complete. The avoidance of the tortoise and the water-tortoise is shared by all the clans of the centre, and is felt by all the Talis to symbolize particularly membership of the ideological community as well as the narrower allegiance to the lineage. But some clans and lineages at the centre have additional or exceptional totems; and the farther we move from the centre towards Gbizug and Ba'ari out of the region of the External *Bɔyar* cult as practised by the Hill Talis, the more conspicuous do these extra avoidances become. Maximal lineages and clans which have

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the social structure as a whole kinship is the fundamental binding element. It furnishes the primary axioms of all categories of interpersonal and inter-group relations.

From the standpoint of the individual, all the norms and conditions that govern his social behaviour fall within a single, syncretic frame of reference; and kinship forms the base line from which this frame of reference is projected. This is a consequence of the syncretic structure of Tale society, based as it is on genealogical connexion. The alinement of individuals and groups for all social purposes follows genealogical lines; with few exceptions, social relations always have a genealogical coefficient. And because they have a common foundation in the genealogical structure of the society, Tale institutions interlock with one another in a consistent scheme. For the same reason Tale social relations do not fall into distinct categories with only adventitious connexions between them. Economic relations serve jural, political, and religious ends as well; political relations are at the same time religious relations; jural rights and duties are aspects of economic, religious, and political bonds.

The extent to which the idiom of kinship dominates Tale thought about human affairs is shown by the tendency of the people to explain conduct that conforms to the norms by appealing to kinship. The late Chief of Tongo, for example, justified his conciliatory tactics with the Golibdaana, in spite of the latter's provocations, on the grounds of their ties of cognatic and affinal kinship. On the other hand, departure from normal standards of conduct is apt to be ascribed to personal idiosyncrasies. Thus when Zaɣahkpemɔre fought with his older brother over the division of their late father's land, the elders of his lineage ascribed it to his violent temper and lack of intelligence. In keeping with this idiom of thought, a gross breach of kinship duty is the prototype of the Tale notion of sin.

Cognatic and Agnatic Kinship

It is essential to distinguish two kinds of genealogical ties among the Tallensi. There are, firstly, cognatic ties, that is, ties of actual or assumed physical consanguinity and of the social relations entailed by them, which link person to person or an individual to a lineage or one lineage to another in a specifically defined and particular bond. Such ties may be traced through males only, through females only, or through both males and females. Secondly, there are lineage ties, social relations based on the tie of common agnatic descent.

Cognatic kinship and agnatic kinship have different, in some situations even opposed, functions in Tale collective life. The distinction turns on the principle that lineage ties always unite people in or relate them to corporate groups serving common interests and held together by common values, whereas cognates do not necessarily form corporate

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

groups. Cognates have mutual bonds of sentiment and reciprocal obligations, but not necessarily common interests. All the members of a given lineage have the same agnatic kin and therefore identical lineage ties; but only identical siblings—that is, brothers or sisters by the same parents—have the same cognatic kin.[1] By automatically making him a member of maximal lineage and clan, his agnatic descent fits the individual into the constituted framework of Tale society. It is this that gives him his political status in the society. It gives him also a special field of defined social relations with clear contours. Cognatic kinship creates a number of contingent social ties for the individual, valid for him only. Unlike lineage ties, they differ in quality; they multiply in the course of his lifetime; in theory their range is indeterminate, since there is no limit to the reckoning of cognatic kinship. Tallensi often discover cognates of whom they were previously ignorant, in the most unexpected places in their own country, even in their own clan. But it is extremely rare for anyone to discover a hitherto unknown agnate, even in these days of relatively great mobility.

The Tallensi maintain, and genealogies of individuals bear this out, that if enough were known of the genealogical relationships of the people of adjacent settlements, they would all be found to be related to one another. In the clan itself, under the surface of its strict patrilineal organization, the filaments of cognatic kinship bind individuals together by special personal bonds which operate independently of lineage ties. This complex and unlimited ramification of cognatic kinship gives these relations great fluidity, in contrast to the comparative fixity of lineage relations. Individuals are often connected by multiple cognatic ties which are differentially effective in different situations; and, as will be clearer later, cognatic ties make breaches in the barriers of lineage and clan exclusiveness, thus extending widely the flow of social relations.

The domestic family is the matrix of all the genealogical ties of the individual, the contemporary mechanism for ever spinning new threads of kinship, and the focal field of social relations based on consanguinity. In it we can observe the working of the nuclear patterns of kinship and the formation of the ideas and values which steer the individual in all his genealogical relationships. In the domestic family we get the sharpest picture of the interaction between cognatic kinship and agnatic or lineage ties. We have there the elementary ties of cognatic kinship linking parent to child and sibling to sibling, and we have also the agnatic tie which

[1] These are the kinsfolk whom Rivers called a man's *kindred*; vide *Kinship and Social Organization*, p. 80. I am avoiding this term as it is best used to refer to a defined social unit in Rivers's sense. Sibship among the Teutons and Celts was reckoned bilaterally on this principle, cf. Vinogradoff, P., *Outlines of Historical Jurisprudence*, vol. i, ch. viii. But the kindred as a defined social unit does not exist among the Tallensi.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

602 these bonds except by birth. No other ties can wholly supersede them in linking person to person and affiliating individuals to defined social groups.

602 611 We have noted, however, that not all genealogical ties have an equal value. Though a person acquires significant social ties through both parents, his agnatic relationships have an outstanding importance; and this is particularly so for a man. For not only is patrilineal descent the vertebral principle of Tale social organization and the vehicle of the continuity and stability of the social structure, but men hold the reins of authority, direct economic life, control the political organization, and are supreme in religious and ceremonial thought and action. From his father a man derives his rights to inherit land and other property, his clan membership and the political rights and ritual obligations that go with it, and his ritual relations with his most important ancestors. A woman does not inherit land or other property of value, nor does she succeed to political or ritual office. But clan membership and the concomitant totemic observances,[1] as well as her ritual allegiance to her patrilineal ancestors, mean a great deal for her social destiny and for her children. In short, paternity is the predominant side of parentage in this conspicuously patriarchal society.

842 848 Like many other primitive societies, the Tallensi recognize a distinction between physiological paternity and jural paternity—between *genitor* and *pater*, as Radcliffe-Brown puts it. However, the Tallensi feel very strongly that a person's physiological father is his or her right jural father. The assumption is that all the social attributes that come to one from one's father should come from a father who both begot one and recognizes one as his legitimate offspring. Thus there is an inevitable tendency for conflict to arise if a person's physiological and jural paternity do not coincide. Such a person tends to be penalized in respect of his social status, for jural paternity by itself cannot altogether take the place of physiological cum jural paternity.

848 The conflict is least in the case of an adulterine child, who is always accepted as the rightful child of its mother's husband. No difficulties at all arise in the case of a daughter, who marries out of the lineage as soon as she is nubile. An adulterine son has complete and unreserved filial status. He has full rights of inheritance, of succession, and of ritual access to his putative patrilineal ancestors. Nevertheless, the blot on the scutcheon is not without effect. The story of Sayəbazaa's first-born son, Kologo, illustrates this.

848 578 Some years before my first visit to Tongo, Kologo had left his father to go and farm near Datok. There seemed to be no adequate motive for this in his case. But when Sayəbazaa died, in 1936, and Kologo as chief mourner had to be summoned for the mortuary rites, I was able to piece together how it had occurred, from guarded hints and veiled comments

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. ix.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

837 his friend's children. Tale sentiment takes no cognizance of physical paternity in this situation. No kinship tie is recognized between the physiological father and the child he was deputed to beget. One might almost describe it as, from their point of view, a kind of artificial insemination.

848 611 The case of an unmarried woman's child (*yi-yeem-bii*) is different. It is brought up as the foster-child of her father or brother. If it is a girl, no difficulties occur, as she will eventually marry and Tale kinship ideas permit *her* children to regard her mother's lineage as their mother's brother's lineage (*ahəb yir*). She will even be allowed to marry into her mother's clan provided it is a different major segment of the clan. Several instances of this are on record; for no stigma attaches to anybody concerned, since an illegitimate child is not a true clan member.

An illegitimate boy's circumstances are not so easy. The evidence of two cases I was acquainted with amply confirms conventional opinion on this subject. Such a boy will grow up to all intents and purposes as a child of his mother's father's or brother's family and as a full member of the clan. He will be treated exactly like other sons of the family, whom he will call his brothers. His quasi-father will, for example, provide the cattle and take the responsibility for his marriage, as would not be done for a legitimate sister's son (*ahəŋ*) growing up in his maternal uncle's (*ahəb*) home. But he has two fundamental disabilities, which nothing can overcome and which pass, by the principle of the corporate identity of the lineage, to his agnatic male descendants. He [428 769] has no right to inherit his quasi-father's patrimonial estate, though he may be permitted to do so if there are no other heirs; and he has no right to sacrifice directly to his spirit, or consequently, to the lineage ancestors. He cannot, therefore, succeed to the custody of lineage ancestors' shrines or hold an office vested in the lineage. The tie of true agnatic descent, which alone confers these rights, cannot be fabricated.

848 An illegitimate boy's status in the lineage is in fact, therefore, inferior to that of his quasi-brothers. He is always liable to a certain amount of covert contempt, though good manners forbid the mention of his irregular descent in the normal course of events. But if he gets involved in a quarrel with his quasi-siblings or quasi-clansmen, even as a child, they might well taunt him as an interloper (*zaŋkuomər*). His lot may be harder, if he has an intractable character, than that of a sister's son (*ahəŋ*) living with his mother's brother (*ahəb*); for the latter has a home of his own to fall back upon, where he is entitled, by right of legitimate descent, to his patrimonial inheritance, protection, and communion in the ancestor cult. In no circumstances, however, can an illegitimate son be deprived of those rights that belong to him. His quasi-father's home is his home, his mother's clan his clan. From him may spring an accessory lineage of the clan. In theory, incidentally, he may marry a daughter of a different major segment of his adoptive clan, but I know

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

insulted or molested; for it was held to be both good policy and a moral duty to treat a slave no differently from a son. As the ward of the lineage ancestors, he had a place and a moral status in the lineage; but, Tallensi say, he was bound to harbour some resentment at his invidious social position, and would certainly try to abscond if he were ill-used.

These ideas are as active as ever among the Tallensi; for a few ex-slaves still survive, and there are one or two sons, grandsons, and remoter agnatic descendants of slaves in many settlements, who, by the lineage principle, retain their ancestors' social status in a much attenuated form. These people have exactly the same place in society that they would have occupied in former times. To judge by their participation in social activities, both profane and ceremonial, there is no obvious distinction between them and other members of the clan. They are as loyal and patriotic members of the clan as any other members of it. Wɔla of Zoo always took a leading part in the public affairs and ceremonial activities of Zoo. I was surprised to discover accidentally that he was an ex-slave. I was told on excellent authority that he is still often teased about his slave status, but that he takes it in good part, saying that since the coming of the white man a slave is as good a man as his neighbour. Usually no one would so affront a man and his quasi-relatives as to refer pointedly to his slave status or descent if he did not provoke it by offensive conduct. Wrongly to accuse a person of slave descent, if only by implication, is a deadly insult. And even those of whom it is true never voluntarily betray it. Not everyone has Wɔla's aggressive sense of humour, and good manners require that tact and discretion be exercised in such delicate matters of social standing.

Analogously, a slave girl's (*da'abpɔk*) status resembled that of an illegitimate daughter. She was taken in marriage like any other girl, so her children had no disabilities in respect of their patrilineal connexions. They regarded their mother's quasi-paternal kin as their maternal uncle's lineage. But I have records of cases in which the descendants of a slave woman have sought out her true paternal kin in a distant land in order to establish correct ritual ties with them.

All the men with whom I discussed the question affirmed without hesitation that it would be disgraceful and immoral to treat a slave, or an illegitimate son or brother, differently from true agnatic kin. But they all emphasized, nevertheless, that a slave or an illegitimate son cannot possibly become a son or a brother in the full sense of these terms. He can be to you *in loco filii* or *fratris* but not *filius* or *frater*, since he cannot sacrifice directly to his quasi-father's spirit or inherit, as of right, his patrimony. The principle at issue is that physical father and social father, *genitor* and *pater*, must be the same person. The vicissitudes of marriage illustrate the same point.

It often happens that a young woman becomes the bride of one man, is later married to another man, by whom she conceives or has a

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

child, and finally returns to settle down with her first husband. The second husband (or his heir) then has the right, at any time during its life, to redeem his begotten child by paying over to the woman's father a proportion of the bride-price equal to one cow. Whether he has or has not completed the formalities of marriage is immaterial. His right rests upon the fact of his acknowledged paternity. Tallensi attach so much importance to having children that they generally make every effort to assert this right. But often enough, through poverty, parsimony, or mere indifference, the child may be left to grow up under the care of its stepfather. There is no difficulty in the case of a girl. When she marries, her stepfather receives one cow out of her bride-price, the cow of rearing (*ughug naah*), in recompense for the effort and expense of rearing her; her true father, or his heir, receives the remaining three head of cattle, one of which he hands over to his erstwhile father-in-law (or his heir) as the redemption payment for his daughter; and the girl's children regard her physical father's lineage, now formally established as her jural father's lineage, as their mother's paternal lineage.

The case of a boy is, again, more complicated. He may be accepted as his stepfather's own child, as if he were an adulterine child. In theory he cannot be excluded from any filial rights in this man's house. In practice his position is anomalous, both in his own estimation and in the eyes of his stepbrothers. The feeling exists that he is a member of his stepfather's clan on sufferance; sometimes a crisis develops when he tries to assert his rights of inheritance. In any case, Tallensi declare, when a boy in this position grows to manhood he usually endeavours, sooner or later, to return to his true paternal home (*kul u ba yiri*). I came across two or three instances of men who grew up with a stepfather and eventually returned to their true agnatic clan. One of them was quite an old man when he did so.

A man has an unconditional right to do this and must be accepted into his father's lineage and clan. He can assert his filial status without any reservations both in religious and in secular matters. To attempt to exclude him would be contrary to the Tale view that any addition to the numbers of a settlement is valuable in itself. What is more important, it would be a violation of the fundamental norms of kinship and therefore an offence against the ancestors, specifically against the new-comer's father and forefathers. Tallensi say that in fact no one would dream of rejecting a son who comes home in this way. The old man I have referred to not only superseded a 'brother' in the inheritance of his father's estate, but was elected tendaana over the heads of men who had dwelt in their natal settlement all their lives. The new-comer's jural status must, however, be regularized in the normal way. Either his father or his father's heir, or, if for some reason he is unable to do so, the man himself, must pay over to his mother's father's heirs the cow of redemption.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The Ritual Coefficient of Patriliny

602 769 All these cases of irregular paternity bring out a point of central importance in native thought. As we shall see in more detail later, the bonds of physical consanguinity and the concomitant social ties created by parenthood are *ipso facto* spiritual and moral bonds. They have a ritual coefficient in which the natives see their deepest meaning and value. One's bonds with one's lineage imply a ritual bond with one's patrilineal ancestors and other mystical forces associated with the existence and well-being of the lineage. They are the chief mystical powers governing the life of the individual. Legitimate paternity is a *sine qua non* for a right relationship with one's agnatic ancestor spirits who watch over one's whole life from the moment of birth. There is a spiritual hiatus between an illegitimate son or a slave's son and his adoptive lineage ancestors. Being only indirectly under their tutelage, and unable to gain direct contact with them by offering sacrifices himself, he cannot use them to master the vicissitudes and frustrations of life as freely as a true scion of their line. Also, as we have seen, the ancestor spirits are the principal sanction enforcing a man's rights to full filial status in his physical father's lineage. As we have observed, political and ritual office can be held only by men who are legitimate members of the lineage in which these offices are vested; and the sanction for this lies in the key functions of these offices in the cult of the ancestors and of the other mystical powers coupled with the lineage.

834 842 769 All social relations in which agnatic descent has a decisive function have this ritual coefficient. Legitimate paternity is bound up with a man's exclusive rights over his wife's reproductive powers, conferred on him by marriage. A child's legitimate paternity is jeopardized if it is conceived or born in a situation in which its father's marital rights do not prevail. Hence, sexual intercourse between a man and his wife (and by extension between any man of the husband's medial lineage and a woman of the wife's medial lineage) at her paternal home is rigorously tabooed; it is a ritual 'pollution of the room (*saŋam dug*)'—i.e. an outrage against the lineage identity—of the girl's father; for a woman has the status of a daughter in her father's house, where she comes under her father's authority and the tutelage of his ancestors.

611 769 In keeping with this, a child must not be born in its mother's father's, or brother's house. Its ties with its maternal kin must not be confounded with its bonds with its paternal kin. These represent opposed forces in its social world, and matrilateral kinship ties must not be allowed to become a threat to lineage ties. A woman bears a child to her husband, an additional member of his lineage and clan. When she conceives, it is the right and duty of her husband and his family to care for her. His ancestor spirits must guard her and the unborn child. In the perilous hour of childbirth she must be cared for by her husband and his family,

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

and watched over by his ancestors. If she or the child dies in childbirth the responsibility falls on her husband. A child should be born under its father's roof, literally into the lineage to which it comes as a profit (*yoor*) and a responsibility, and under the auspices of its patrilineal ancestors, the spiritual arbiters of its destiny, to whom it will later in life bring sacrifices. Its life will depend on these ancestors, one of whom will immediately demand to be made its spiritual guardian, charged with preserving its life (*mar u ŋɔvɔr*).

Not only should a child be born under its father's roof, but it should, ideally, be reared, or at least be brought through the first dangerous months of infancy, in its father's house. Circumstances occasionally compel a child to be entrusted to the care of its mother's family, and the Tallensi are practical enough to accept this necessity with equanimity. But they are extremely reluctant to let a young infant pass out of the direct tutelage of its paternal kin and ancestors even for a short while. Thus strong objection is raised if a young wife takes her infant and goes to stay at her parents' house for some time. Here, again, practical necessity may leave no alternative, but there is always a feeling of uneasiness, as can be seen from the following case. When Nindɔyat of Zubiuŋ died, his youngest wife went home to her father's house at Tɔŋ-Seug, about a quarter of a mile from her late husband's house, taking her infant of some six months with her. Nindɔyat's brother and prospective heir tried to prevent her going, but she was not well, and they had to admit that she would be better cared for by her mother than by her co-wives. So they allowed her to go. A couple of weeks later, however, the baby fell ill, and though the young mother was staying only a few minutes' walk from her late husband's house, she returned to it immediately. 'She came running back home', her late husband's brother told me, 'because the child was ill. Its (dead) father had not agreed for it to be taken away (that is, the dead father, now a spirit, had mystically caused the child's illness as a sign of his displeasure). And supposing the child were to die at its maternal uncle's house? Should we not say that they had caused the death of our child?' The proper ritual measures to cure the child, without which practical leechcraft could not avail, could only be taken by its father or his representative in its father's house. The young mother believed this as firmly as her late husband's heir.

For all these reasons it is a taboo (*kihɔr*) for a child to be born in its mother's father's house. His ancestor spirits cannot watch over mother and child, for they do not 'own (*so*)' the child. It is, therefore, dangerous for the child's health and chances of survival. Of course, such a thing may, and sometimes does happen by accident. Then the child's father must, whenever he can afford it, erase the pollution by the ceremony of 'removing the blood (*vaa ziem*)' of the birth from his father-in-law's house. He sends a sheep and beer to his father-in-law as a placation

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

strictly differentiated from a son in jural terms. The kinship tie between sister's son and mother's brother is an important breach in the genealogical fence enclosing the agnatic lineage; it is one of the main gateways of an individual's social relations with members of other clans than his own.

But the recognition accorded to the mother's agnatic kin does not bring out the deeper implications of maternal origin as the complementary of paternal origin. These implications are contained in the concept *soog* (pl. *saarət* or *soorət*). This concept involves the idea of matrilineal descent in contrast to that of patrilineal descent. Both in its range of efficacy, its mode of operation, its jural and ritual value, and its emotional and sentimental connotation, matrilineal descent stands in contrast to patriliny.

For obvious physiological reasons the bond of consanguinity with one's mother is unique and unalterable; and it is a peculiarly personal bond. The fact that one's jural status is not derived from one's mother serves to emphasize the personal nature of this bond. A person's mother may desert his father and leave him to be reared (*ugh*) by another woman; he may feel some resentment over this all his life; but she remains his true mother, 'the mother who bore him (*ma dɔɣarug*)'. Nothing can alter this fact or extinguish the kinship ties that arise from it.

We postpone for a later chapter a consideration of the emotional ties of mother and child. The concept *soog* has definite emotional implications; but here we are concerned with its implications for the social structure. *Soog* means a bond of consanguinity which excludes completely any reckoning with lineage affiliation. People who are *saarət* define themselves biologically as 'the offspring of one womb'—or, in the actual phraseology of the natives, 'to have come from one vagina (*yi pεn yεni*)'. This is the common way of stating it; occasionally, but far less commonly, one hears people defining themselves as patrilineally related by the corresponding phrase 'to be the children of one penis (*woor yεni biis*)'.

Saarət, therefore, are uterine kin. Between mother and child there is a uterine bond corresponding to the agnatic bond between father and child; and children of one woman are *saarət*, irrespective of their paternity. A woman may have children by different men of the same clan or of different clans; they are *saarət*, irrespective of their clan affiliations.

Soog is more than the bond of personal kinship between mother and child, and between siblings by the same mother. It is the bond of uterine descent perpetuated through the female line in the same way as the bond of agnatic descent is transmitted through the male line. Uterine siblings are *saarət*; uterine sisters' children are *saarət* (but not uterine brothers' children, for the children of men are not their father's *saarət*); uterine female cousins' children are *saarət*; and so on,

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

theoretically, without limit. In short, people of common uterine descent are socially identified with one another; but they do not form a corporate group.

The social recognition of the uterine line entails not only that *saarət* have defined ways of behaving towards one another, but also that the fact of matrilineal descent is given an institutional embodiment. Matrilineal descent confers distinctive social attributes on people. In this Tale culture follows the rule found in most West African cultures that recognize both lines of descent.[1] The dominant line of descent confers the overtly significant attributes of social personality—jural status, rights of inheritance and succession to property and office, political allegiance, ritual privileges and obligations; and the submerged line confers certain spiritual characteristics. Among the Tallensi it is easy to see that this is a reflex of the fact that the bond of uterine descent is maintained as a purely personal bond. It does not subserve common interests of a material, jural, or ritual kind; it unites individuals only by ties of mutual interest and concern not unlike those that prevail between close collateral kin in our culture. While it constitutes one of the factors that counterpoise the exclusiveness of the agnatic line, it does not create corporate groups competing with the agnatic lineage and clan. Carrying only a spiritual attribute, the uterine tie cannot undermine the jural and politico-ritual solidarity of the patrilineal lineage.

Uterine Kinship and the Notion of Witchcraft

The critical spiritual attribute carried by the *soog* line is the potentiality of being a witch (*səi*, pl. *soob*—a term evidently cognate with *soog*). This potentiality adheres only to the female line and defines that line in social terms. 'This is my *soog*' a person usually says when introducing a uterine relative. 'If he (or she) flies magically (*ayat*) I, too, fly magically; if he sees magically (*nye*) I, too, see magically.' The potentiality of being a witch is hereditary in the female line. A woman's son and daughter may both become witches if she is a witch. If a person is accused of being a witch, all his or her *saarət* are automatically suspect of this inborn mystical vice. His agnatic kin are not implicated, not even his own father or his half-siblings by the same father. These are the points Tallensi invariably stress, both among themselves and in answer to an inquirer, if they are asked to define the meaning of *soog*.

It is significant that witchcraft occupies a minor place in Tale mystical thought and ritual action, and that is one reason why the Tallensi make no secret of its hereditary transmission in the female line. They

[1] Cf., e.g., R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*; C. D. Forde, 'Kinship in Umor—Double Unilateral Organization in a Semi-Bantu Society', *American Anthropologist*, xli, 1939.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

The idea of witchcraft is not
easily reconcilable with the structure of Tale society, dominated as it is by the patrilineal principle. As we know,[1] the residential unit is based on the agnatic lineage and the local community as a whole is based on lineage grouping. Most corporate and co-operative activities depend on lineage ties. The notion of maleficent secret malice involved in the idea of witchcraft is incompatible with the structure of the localized lineage. The occurrence of witchcraft within a lineage would poison the mutual confidence of agnates, disrupt their corporate relationships, and so throw social life into confusion. As it is, the pegging of witchcraft to the uterine line serves to circumvent any danger it might be to the community. An accusation of witchcraft does not implicate the lineage. It is an individual matter, and other individuals on whom it might be expected to throw suspicion are scattered through various lineages and clans. They may protest, but they have no means of taking organized action in defence of their reputation. In any case, an accusation of witchcraft has a very limited range of reaction. Other lineages and families than those injured by the alleged witch do not feel the injury, and even if they harbour uterine kin of the accused person, self-interest prompts them to disregard the implications of the accusation. The folk-lore of witchcraft provides loopholes for such adaptations of logic to social realities. Some say, for example, that a person only becomes a bad witch if his or her mother gives him or her 'witch's medicine' to eat in infancy.

The hereditary transmission of the capacity of being a witch is not connected with the blood (*ziem*), according to Tale physiological ideas. Both parents transmit their blood to their offspring, as can be seen from the fact that children may resemble either parent in looks. It is solely a matter of the eye (*nif*, pl. *nini*)—not the physical eye but the inner, clairvoyant eye of the witch.

Uterine Kinship and the Notion of Tyuk

The social definition of uterine descent in terms of the notion of witchcraft is consistent with its functions in the structure of Tale society. The meaning of *soog* to the native is neatly symbolized in this notion. And this is true, also, of the only other attribute of social personality that is held to follow the uterine connexion. This is summed up in the concept of *tyuk*.

A person through whose words or actions fighting that leads to the slaying of a man or men is instigated bears a particular kind of mystical responsibility. The slaying of a man gives rise to a chain of mystical blood-guilt, and the person who bears the guilt of instigation may have been an unwitting agent and unaware of his guilt. Supposing, for example, I summon a man from another settlement to come and see me about something, and on his way home he meets a man to whom he owes a debt. Supposing the two men have an argument which ends in

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. x.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

It is analogous to the way in which a man's agnatic descendants become liable for his sins, though it is not so rigorous and consequential in action as the responsibility for sins and delicts that adheres to the male line. *Tyuk* is connected primarily with males; though it is of minor significance in the social definition of uterine kinship, compared with witchcraft, it obviously fits in with the principles of Tale social organization in the same way.[1]

Uterine Kinship as a Personal Bond

As we have observed, the fundamental distinction between uterine kinship and agnatic descent is that the former does not give rise to corporate units of social structure. *Soog* is essentially a personal bond, a bond of mutual interest and concern uniting individual to individual. Witchcraft, similarly, is an individual act of mystical aggression due to personal malice against an individual. The model of the relations between *saarət* is the affection, devotion, and strong feeling of mutual identification that prevails between parent and child or between full siblings of the same sex. Its keynote is mutual trust as between equals. It is never thought of as a matter of rights and duties but as a matter of sentiment, of spontaneous goodwill and intimate, personal confidence. Hence the term *soog* is often loosely used to refer to someone with whom one has a relationship of a similar sort, or to denote a very close relative of a class of relatives, whether or not they are true *saarət*. An intimate and trusted friend is like your *soog*, the Tallensi say. Two daughters of the same lineage, but of unrelated mothers, married into a single joint family feel themselves to be particularly closely related and identified with each other by contrast with their conjugal family, and thus speak of each other as 'my *soog*'. The children of two men who were uterine kin, keeping up the friendship of their fathers, talk of themselves as *saarət*. Two men of the same lineage, whether they are close or distant agnates, who have a common maternal uncle's lineage (*ahəb yiri*)—i.e. whose mothers' brothers belong to a single segment of a maximal lineage—feel a bond of personal kinship distinguishing their relationship with each other from their relationships with their co-members of the lineage. In contexts where they wish to emphasize their personal bonds in contrast to their common membership of the lineage they might describe each other as 'my *soog*'. And I once heard a man refer to his son-in-law as 'my *soog* son-in-law (*n-deem-soog*)'. This is a contradiction in terms, for marriage being prohibited between kin of any degree, a man cannot be both a son-in-law and a *soog*. But the speaker explained that he was using this term in order to distinguish

[1] There is an interesting psychological problem here, but it lies outside our present scope. *Tyuk* and witchcraft might be regarded as the male and female aspects, respectively, of deep-seated vindictive impulses connected with the mother.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

606 this son-in-law from his other sons-in-law, both because this young man
611 was the husband of his own daughter, whereas the others were the
602 husbands of his dead brothers' daughters, and because this son-in-law was as devoted to him as his own sons. Tallensi often say that a man's own children are virtually his *saarət*, though not technically so. There is no confusion in the native mind about these usages of the concept of *soog*; they understand and explain clearly that these are metaphorical usages.

835 The feeling of close, personal intimacy in the relationship of uterine kin is best brought out in the native attitude about sexual relations between *saarət*. It is incestuous if the couple know they are *saarət*, however distant their uterine connexion. It is like incest between own brother and sister, and is viewed in the same way as the latter. Tallensi think of it with disgust rather than horror. Sexual desire for a known *soog* relative is so utterly inconsistent with the general attitude of uterine kin towards each other that it is unthinkable in a decent person. It is a taboo (*kihər*) which normal people take for granted. There are no ritual or jural sanctions against incest with a *soog*, and Tallensi would say that there is no need for them. At no point are the relations of uterine kin subject to sanctions; 'I will not refuse him, I will not deny him anything', says the native of a *soog*, thinking of this as an axiomatic feature of *soog* kinship.

582 Marriage between *saarət* is, of course, forbidden, and the elders of
602 the lineages concerned would never allow it if the couple are known to be uterine kin. But sometimes, owing to the devious ramifications of uterine kinship, a married couple discover that they are distant *saarət*.
[586] If there are no children, or the elders of the girl's lineage want a pretext for taking her from her husband, they might insist on the dissolution of the marriage. If a child has been born, or the couple refuse to part for any other reason, their kinship must be ritually severed. The rite is very simple. The essential act consists of the husband and wife grasping a calabash with one hand each and wrenching it in halves. This symbolizes the splitting (*bɔk*) of their kinship.

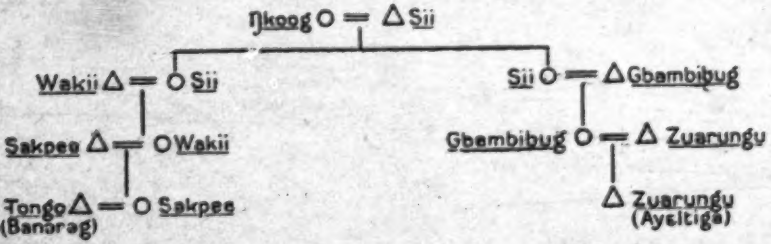
602 It is not uncommon for a man to have one or more *saarət* (other than his siblings) among the members of his own clan. They may be the sons of one mother by different fathers, or the sons of sisters, or of more distantly related uterine kinswomen who married into the same clan. In such cases one can see how the loyalties based on uterine kinship are distinguished from the ties of lineage membership. Yikpɛmdaan and Tinta'alam of Tɔŋ-Kuorɔg, the two senior elders of Kuorɔg section, are *saarət*, but members of different segments of the section. Tinta'alam's children and brothers' children speak of Yikpɛmdaam as their father (*ba*); Yikpɛmdaan and Tinta'alam speak of each other as brothers, since their mothers were full sisters. Their mutual affection and attachment, going back to the childhood of Yikpɛmdaan, when he lived for a time with Tinta'alam, are well known. Tinta'alam

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of *soog* kinship to the Tallensi. Each of them has found a new friend who will be to him as a brother. If he has business in his *soog*'s clan he will be able to go there with an easy mind; for he will be assured of an hospitable welcome in his *soog*'s house and of his *soog*'s assistance in his suit. Moreover, through this *soog* he will be introduced to other distant *saarət* unknown to him but known to his *soog*.

Saarət discover one another in other ways too. One evening I met Banərəg's wife coming from my boys' quarters. She told me that she had taken some food to one of the boys, Ayɛltiga, a native of Zuarungu, who, she had just learnt, was her *soog*. She had been to see her maternal grandmother's sister's son, at Gbambibug (she herself is a Sakpee woman), and he had told her that Ayɛltiga was their common *soog*. So she had hastened home to call on her newly found *soog* and had cooked a meal for him to show him the hospitality due from a *soog*. She told me this with many expressions of pleasure.

The following genealogy shows the connexion between Banərəg's wife and Ayɛltiga. It is typical of the genealogical range within which uterine kinship is usually effective.



(Clan name of each person beside the sex symbol; personal names in parenthesis)

As this genealogy shows, the uterine line can be thought of as 'travelling' from clan to clan with the generations; and that is how the natives visualize it. 'Our mother' (the progenitrix of the line), said Banərəg's wife 'went forth from Dkoog (*yi ŋkoog na*) and married into Sii; and then his (Ayɛltiga's) grandmother (*ma kpeem*) married Gbambibug and my grandmother married Wakii; and then his mother (*ma*) married Zuarungu and my mother married Sakpee.' The *soog* line is visualized as a continuous entity. *Saarət* often refer to each other by kinship terms, but in a very loose way. A person is inclined to speak of a *soog* as, for instance, 'my elder sibling', simply because he or she is senior in age, though possibly junior in generation. More commonly a *soog* is simply 'my *soog*'; and if it is a woman, she tends to be identified with the uterine line as a whole and is described as 'mother (*ma*)', irrespective of her generation status, especially if she is older than the speaker. A relationship similar to that of parent and child often exists between *saarət* who differ considerably in age.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

or implements there. This is due partly to the values associated with it, partly to its use as a stall for livestock, and partly to its being an outside room from which things might easily be stolen. A young man like Ɔndieso has nothing but a couple of unimportant medicine horns stuck into the thatch, a log to sit on, and a few odds and ends in his rather tumbledown *zɔŋ*; for he makes little use of it. Yet the house would be incomplete without a *zɔŋ*; for the *zɔŋ* is the sanctuary of the *yirdaana*'s lineage-ancestor spirits. It is no profanation, in Tale eyes, to fold livestock there. The mundane and the mystical are complementary in Tale thought. Because the ancestor spirits abide there, a diviner holds his consultations in his *zɔŋ*. Among the Talis the lineage-shrine (*bɔɣar*) always rests inside or against the outer wall of the lineage head's *zɔŋ*; the Namoos generally keep such a shrine in an inside room or courtyard. Even if the other rooms of his homestead are thatched, a tendaana's *zɔŋ* must have a flat roof, because the spirits of his predecessors dwell there and the lineage *bɔɣar* and indoor shrines dedicated to the Earth are in it. The investiture of a tendaana culminates in his ritual induction into the *zɔŋ*, which is the final test of his acceptability to the ancestors and the Earth. A chief has a special *zɔŋ* (*zanto'o*), which is not only the sanctuary of the spirits of former chiefs but his council-chamber and the room in which he performs the rites that bless the community during the Great Festivals.

To an elder of great seniority in the lineage hierarchy his *zɔŋ* has a deeper value than to a man of junior status. A person's status is most conspicuously proclaimed at his or her death, when his or her social personality has to be cancelled by rite and ceremony. When a man of subordinate status in the lineage, a man who is not yet the master of his own house, or a young woman, dies, he or she is carried to the grave through a hole broken in the wall of the homestead for this purpose. But the head of a house, or an old woman, is carried out through a hole specially cut in the outside wall of the *zɔŋ*. '*Ti Talis tɛbhɔm nla*—This is the [great] honour of us, the Tallensi', an informant explained to me. The conventional idea of one who deserves it is that of a man or woman who leaves children and grandchildren to perpetuate his or her line and to celebrate his or her decease. When his homestead is being rebuilt, an old man often tells his sons, half-jocularly but with more than a hint of earnestness: 'Hurry up with the roofing of the *zɔŋ*. I might die, and I don't wish to be carried out through the gateway because the *zɔŋ* is unfinished.' 'May Heaven permit me to attain to lying in the *zɔŋ*, when I die, and forfend the breaking of the wall for me to be carried out' a young man once exclaimed fervently when he was talking about the funeral of a worthy elder. The last rites by which a dead person is finally aggregated to the ancestor spirits take place in the *zɔŋ*.

The *zɔŋ*, the *sapak*, and the *zanɔr* stand for the ideological and jural dominance of the male line of descent. Together, and in particular

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the *zɔŋ*, they symbolize the continuity of the lineage of which the master of that house is but one member, a link in a process to which he makes his greatest contribution as a father and head of a house. Hence the *zɔŋ* of a lineage head, being the sanctuary of all the lineage ancestors, is regarded as the *zɔŋ* of the whole lineage, and his *zanɔr* as the *zanɔr* of the lineage. When the Hill Talis were forcibly expelled in 1910–11 and their homesteads demolished, the heads of the maximal lineages later came back by stealth to rebuild a small part of their *zɔŋ* walls, for they could not appropriately sacrifice to their lineage ancestors elsewhere than in the lineage *zɔŋ*. If a woman commits adultery, she sins against her husband's lineage ancestors, thus imperilling the health and welfare of her husband and children. An adulteress, that is to say, transgresses the rights over her reproductive powers vested absolutely in her husband's lineage. Thus, if a woman is suspected of adultery she is subjected to the ordeal of entering (*kpe*) the lineage *zɔŋ* or *zanɔr*. She must face the ancestors directly, for she has committed an outrage against the lineage principle the absolute value of which is symbolized in and safeguarded by the ancestor spirits.[1] If she is guilty and does not confess, she will get ill and perhaps die. Women are terrified of this ordeal, which rarely fails to produce a confession.

Though they come and go freely in the *sapak* and *zɔŋ* in the ordinary course of domestic life, the women and children belong specifically to the domestic quarters proper. These lie behind a low wall (*ycbɔg*) a yard or so in height and about the same in length, at the back of the *sapak*. This wall usually runs between the back of a kitchen or storeroom and a large bullet-shaped chamber from 7 to 10 feet high and 6 to 10 feet in diameter at the base. This is the granary (*buur*). One suffices for a small family like Ondieso's. A wealthier man with a more numerous household may have one principal granary and one or more smaller ones. A granary has only one opening, at the top, covered with a lid of tightly plaited thatch like an enormous hat.

In the granary, again, Tale architecture embodies a fundamental element in the structure of the domestic unit. A bird's-eye view of a Tale homestead would show the principal granary as standing roughly in the centre of the circle of rooms, rising like a beacon between that section of the homestead which in use, thought, and feeling is the domain of the men, and that section which forms the living-quarters and is ruled by the women. The granary is the pivot on which the smooth working of the domestic unit turns. It holds the millet and guinea corn which provide the staple food of the natives. Without this, life cannot be satisfactorily sustained from one harvest to the next, and the household cannot exist, let alone keep its unity. What a sufficiency of food means to the Tallensi has been described in our previous

[1] This is the complementary notion to that of 'polluting the room' described above, p. 28.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

vanity apart, they do require ample storage-room for the large quantities of clothes, the saddlery and trappings of their horses, the innumerable odds and ends of European origin, and many articles of native production which they have accumulated by purchase or gift. Their good fortune is exceptional. Others content themselves with small and modest private rooms. Leatherworkers and blacksmiths also often have private rooms where they keep their tools and the materials of their craft.

No special provision is made for young children or girls. They live in their mothers' rooms. An unmarried young man usually has a special room of his own, essentially a sleeping-room (*doo*), in his mother's *dug*; and if there are several adolescent boys in a family a *doo* may be built for them in one of the women's *dugət*.

The construction of the dwelling-house shows graphically the division of the domestic family into two complementary spheres. On the one hand, we have the sphere in which the patricentral *yir* predominates; on the other, that in which the matricentral *dug* has priority. It is the line of cleavage between descent from the father (*ba dɔŋam*) and descent from the mother (*ma dɔŋam*), principles which are antithetical in form but complementary in function in the domestic organization. Maternal origin supplies the canon of differentiation within the family, paternal descent the principle of integration. In the polygynous joint family, which is the natives' ideal domestic unit, the constituent *dugət* are relatively autonomous in relation to one another, and in certain respects even mutually opposed. The *yir* combines them into a single integral unit, but they are not swallowed up; they retain their specific identity according to maternal origin. The *yir*, then, is the complementary factor to the *dug*; it is also the synthesis of a group of *dugət* at a higher level of organization. This, as has been shown in our previous book, is both the structural model and the social matrix of the lineage system.

The Developmental Cycle of the Joint Family

We have found it convenient to fix our analysis of the Tale homestead by reference to the simplest kind of independent domestic unit. But the elementary family, as we have already remarked, is neither the ideal nor the most common type of independent domestic unit in Taleland; for the typical substratum of a domestic group is not the individual breadwinner but an effective minimal lineage.[1] The domestic group grows, changes, and dissolves with the growth cycle of this lineage, and a particular elementary family is only an episode in this cycle. The structure of the Tale family cannot be divorced from its existence in time. We have to examine it as a process. At any given time we find domestic families at every stage of development in a Tale community.

[1] Cf. p. 9 above for a definition of this unit. A full analysis of its constitution is given in *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xii.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER IV

HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The General and the Particular in the Pattern of Domestic Relations

611 IT is clear from Chapter II that *dɔyam*, the fact of birth, the event that fixes one's descent immutably, takes precedence over all other conditions governing the social relations and the social roles of a Talɔŋ. This principle comes out in all departments of Tale social life, and nowhere so plainly as in the organization of domestic life. We turn, therefore, to examine the working of kinship in the domestic family, which we have called the focal field of kinship.

593 It is important to bear in mind that kinship relations in the family group are inter-articulated in a single configuration, dominated by the *patria potestas* of the male head of the family. The relations of father and child are coloured by the relations of mother and child that coexist with them, and the relations of mother and child acquire a special accent in the context of the relations between co-wives. Particular domestic relationships appear in their true light only when they are considered as part of the total pattern. The polarity of *dug* and *yir* moulds them all; all play a part in the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the structure of the family. All, moreover, are subject to the pull and pressure of genealogical connexions and groupings outside the family circle.

593 606 The natives are very conscious of this, and take it into account in the management of their lives. They say, for instance, that a woman's parents continue to have great influence over her for some years after her marriage and that is why her husband must keep on the good side of his parents-in-law. 'Don't you know what in-lawship means?' said Bayankura, somewhat lugubriously, when I found him hard at work helping to rebuild his father-in-law's homestead. Again, Tiezien's family believed that he was much under the influence of his senior wife, Tanzoo. So when by various pretexts he caused both of his late brother's sons to lose the young wives they had recently taken, they ascribed it morosely to Tanzoo's jealousy of their mother, Tiezien's second wife.

181 We shall not attempt a full-dress study of Tale family life; here we are concerned only with the structurally significant norms. In a society as homogeneous and economically undifferentiated as that of the Tallensi, people of the same sex, age, and social standing tend to have the same life history; and organized units such as the lineage and the family tend to have a stereotyped structure and development. The common denominators of action stand out.

858 156 Yet it is a constantly reiterated assumption of the natives that no two